How to Read Tarot



in
7 Easy Steps

How to Read Tarot in 7 Easy Steps \
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Preface

Now That You Have Decided to Learn How to Read Tarot Cards

Deciding to start working with the tarot can be a daunting prospect. Now that you have decided to learn, where do you begin? You may be tempted to run out and buy every book you find on the subject, but I highly recommend that you do not. I also discourage you from picking up the first book you find on the subject. Also, do not purchase the first "pretty" deck you see. Read over Step 1 first for recommendations on how to select a deck. Save those beautiful decks for after you have learned how to read the cards.

Every book on the tarot is someone's interpretation. Their point of view is not any more correct than your impressions just because they wrote a book on the subject. The Empress card may mean something very different to you than it does to someone else, but there is nothing wrong with that. Every reader must use their own thoughts and their own feelings. When I relied only on the books my readings were nowhere near as accurate as they have been since I started following my own intuition.

Before you ever open any book on the tarot you should look at your cards with fresh eyes first. Discover your own impressions of the cards before you read about someone else's opinion. Once you have heard someone's opinion you are not likely to forget it. Your impressions will be affected by what you have read or heard whether you realize it or not. This is why I suggest that you look at the cards on your own before you incorporate someone else's thoughts into your interpretation of the images.

I suggest that you purchase a notebook for a tarot journal or keep one on your computer. Go through each card individually and write down your impressions. The more you look at the image you will notice more. The image may remind you of something or resonate with you in some way. Just write it all down. It is very useful to do this. It is important to know your unadulterated thoughts on the cards and keeping a record of it for the future allows you to add things and see how your thoughts have changed over time.

After you have gone through all of the cards then reading books and articles on the subject is useful. My two personal favorites that I have read are: **Tarot for Beginners** by P. Scott Hollander and **Seventy-Eight Degrees of Wisdom** by Rachel Pollack. I have read other books about the Tarot, but these are the books I continually return to.

Learning about the tarot is more about the experience than the end result. The process does not end. There is always more to learn, and there are always other decks to use. How we see the cards can also teach us about ourselves, and as **The Encyclopedia of Tarot** says: "What we see in the symbology of tarot derives in large measure from our own intuition and, once revealed, reflects back upon each of us to further enrich our lives."

Tarot reading is a personal activity and a very intuitive affair. To learn to read tarot cards, one must have a basic understanding of the tarot card meaning of each card, know the fundamental character traits of people represented by the four tarot card suits of the Minor Arcana and should be familiar with the different tarot card spreads in tarot.

Step One: Select a Deck

Tarot Cards-pick one that appeals to your taste, style and cultural background. You have to be comfortable with your chosen tarot deck. Feel the good vibes. You will find that your tarot reading will be smooth and flowing.

Beginners should select a standard Rider-Waite tarot deck as their very first deck. There are several good reasons for this:

- Most tarot books are based on the Rider Waite; therefore, the pictures in the book will be the same as or similar to the deck you have in your hands;
- The Rider Waite is standard and it is best to learn from a standard or traditional deck.
- Suggestions for a standard Rider Waite deck are:
  The Rider Waite (A.E. Waite, artist Pamela Colman Smith, US Games Systems)
  The Universal Waite (A.E. Waite, recolored by Mary Hanson-Roberts, US Games Systems)
  The Radiant Rider Waite (A.E. Waite, redrawn & recolored by Virginia Poshkus)
  The Universal Tarot (Robert de Angelis, Lo Scarabeo)

If you would like to see samples of these cards online, go to **http://www.aeclectic.net/tarot/** where they have card images of many decks.

Step 2: Learn the Card Meanings

Have a basic understanding of all the tarot card meanings of the 78 cards of the tarot deck. It is **not** a long arduous task. In the long run, it can be rewarding and illuminating. Interpreting tarot cards opens up your intuition and as a result leads to greater awareness of the self. It will reveal influences and half hidden motives outside your control as well.

There are two ways you can learn tarot: memorize the meanings of the cards; or use your intuition.

1. Memorization

If you are good at memorizing, then I have provided a list of meanings for all the cards.

THE MAJOR ARCANA TAROT CARD MEANINGS

0. THE FOOL: Youthful folly, innocence, blinded by ignorance, listen to warnings, the novice.
1. THE MAGICIAN- Self-control, skill, action, taking charge.
2. THE HIGH PRIESTESS- Intuition, wisdom, mysteries, secrets, tenacity.
3. THE EMPRESS: Fertility, abundance, mother, health, kindliness.
4. THE EMPEROR: Willpower, ambition, stability, father, benefactor.
5. THE HIEROPHANT: Marriage, good advice, religion, the higher self, mercy.
6. THE LOVERS: Love, sexual union, beauty, emotional success, trials overcome.
7. THE CHARIOT: The driving force, triumph, war, vengeance, providence.
8. STRENGTH: Fortitude, courage, energy, success, self-discipline.
9. THE HERMIT: Prudence, a lonely spiritual quest, treason, caution, inertia.
10. WHEEL OF FORTUNE: The hand of fate, a turn for the better, luck, destiny, abundance.
11. JUSTICE: The law, truth, balance, control, a contract.
12. THE HANGED MAN: Wisdom in difficulties, self-sacrifice, intuition, initiation, prophesy.
13. DEATH: Transformation, events beyond your control, ending corruption, a new but difficult start, inevitable major changes. (the tarot will not predict an actual death)
14. TEMPERANCE: Management, economy, spirit transcending matter, moderation, wise counsel
15 THE DEVIL: Anger, violence, jealousy, greed, deceit, instinct, sexual passion.
16. THE TOWER: Catastrophe, repossession, ruin, adversity, calamity.
17. THE STAR: Hope, goals, expectations, guiding force, enlightenment, bright prospects.
18. THE MOON: Dark forces, nightmares, illusion, hidden fears, danger overcome through intuition..
19. THE SUN: Happiness, joy, rebirth, freedom, happy marriage, success.
20. THE LAST JUDGEMENT: A major decision, outcome, final result, rebirth, problems overcome.
21. THE WORLD: Successful completion, assured success, recognition, long distance travel, harmony.

THE MINOR ARCANA TAROT CARD MEANINGS

The Minor Arcana is divided into four suits:

WANDS: This suit covers intellectual activities and career.
CUPS: Represents emotions, love, pleasure and sensitivity.
SWORDS: Involves struggles, difficulties and illness.
PENTACLES: Deal with material world, finances and property.

There are four court Tarot Cards to each suit: King, Queen, Knight, and Page. These can represent people in the querent's life or aspects of personality. Pages & Knights can represent children or young people of either sex. The aces indicate the beginning of a new activity and the Tarot Cards from two to ten represent aspects of the querent's life, past, present and future.

Here's the basic meanings for the minor Tarot cards:

WANDS (STAFFS, RODS) TAROT MEANINGS:
ACE: A new job or enterprise, initiative, ideas, invention.
2- dissatisfaction with material things, restlessness, thinking about events happening elsewhere.
3.- Overseas trade, planned travel, commerce, established strength.
4.- Celebration, country life, socializing, prosperity, peace and concord.
5.- Petty arguments between groups of people. A sham fight. Squabbles.
6.- Victory achieved. Good news. The support of others. Recognition.
7.- Valor. Winning against the odds. Overcoming opposition. Getting on top of your troubles.
8.- Communication. A message or letter. Swiftness. A speedy conclusion.
9.- An uncomfortable wait. Gathering strength. Problems still to be dealt with.
10.- Oppression. A burden that's hard to carry. Overwork. Emotional pressure. Unpleasant news.
KING- A cleaver, honest, man who gives good advice.
QUEEN- An astute woman with a good business sense.
KNIGHT- Change of residence. An enterprising young person.
PAGE- Good news announced. Faithful young person or child.

CUPS TAROT MEANINGS:
ACE- The beginnings of emotional happiness. A new love or re-kindling of marriage. Joy, contentment, fertility.
2.- Emotional and spiritual love. Love blessed by heaven.
3.- Celebration, merriment, good friends.
4.- Discontentment or depression may cause the loss of a golden opportunity. Weariness.
5.- Crying over spilt milk. Opportunity is at hand and there's new bridges to cross.
6.- Childhood memories or friends bring happiness. Happy childhood.
7.- Fantasy and illusion distract the seeker.
8.- Putting the past behind you. A brave but difficult decision.
9.- Satisfaction guaranteed- but beware of complacency.
10.- Ecstatic personal and family happiness.
KING- Sensitive and creative fatherly man.
QUEEN.-Sensitive, visionary woman. Can sometimes get depressed.
KNIGHT.-The grail knight. Romantic, artistic, imaginative. A message of love.
PAGE.- A sensitive youngster. A bright idea. News. .

SWORDS TAROT MEANINGS:
ACE- Triumph of the will. The start of a forceful attitude.
2.-A decision that requires an unprejudiced attitude .Intuitive understanding. Amnesty.
3.- Heartache. Rupture. Division .Delay.
4.- Rest, retreat and solitude. A time of recovery.
5.- Dishonor and loss. Betrayal by friend.
6.- Travel or holiday. Escaping difficulties.
7.- Theft, deceit, trickery. Beware of impostor.
8.- Frustration, imprisonment. Criticism and sickness.
9.- Worry, despair and neurosis. Bad dreams and pressing problems.
10- Failure, tears, sadness or illness. But the worst is over and a new dawn comes.

KING- Critical man in authority. His decision is final.
QUEEN- Sorrowful woman in authority. She understands pain and sadness.
KNIGHT- A ruthless person. Acts quickly and will try to twist the law to their advantage.
PAGE- An untrustworthy younger person. A spy who will stab you in the back.

PENTACLES (COINS, DISKS) TAROT MEANINGS:
ACE- A golden opportunity. Abundance and improved financial prospects.
2.- Emotional ups and downs. Juggling the finances.
3.- Skills appreciated. Esteem, honor and reward.
4.- Saving money. Caution with money. Covetousness. Wealth invested wisely.
5.- Poverty and hardship. Material troubles. Entangled relationship. Spiritual poverty.
6.- Gifts, presents, help at hand and generosity. Don't let money pass through your fingers.
7.- Impatience. Things will come in the fullness of time. Anxiety about money.
8.- Success achieved by hard work. Skills in craft and business. Job improvements.
9.- A legacy, unearned money, material contentment, rewards. pleasure.
10.- Stable home, riches, family life, success achieved.
KING- Wealthy intelligent man. Valor, stability.
QUEEN- Serious, intelligent, motherly woman. Opulence, security, generosity.
KNIGHT- Dependable, responsible man. A bank manager or investor. Hard work, perseverance.
PAGE- An ambitious young person. Success in study and career. Management skills, materialist.

2. Using Your Intuition

So, how can you use your intuition to read the Tarot?

One possible way to do this is to pull a card (either randomly or in order) from your tarot deck and examine the picture on this card. Is there a male figure, female figure or both? Does the person or people look happy or sad? What other things are in the picture such as swords, cups, pentacles (a 5 pointed star with a circle around it)? Is the scene indoors, or outdoors? Is there water or trees? Carefully look at the card you chose mentally noting all the details.

Next, take a sheet of paper and a pen or pencil and write down a brief story or a description about the picture in the card. Don't forget to write down which card it is as well! This story doesn't have to be complex, just 3 or 4 sentences is fine. Read it back to yourself. What kind of story did you tell? Keep in mind that different people will see different stories, but most likely there will be common themes. There is no one "right" story or interpretation of a tarot card.

There are a couple of ways you can use this technique to learn to read the Tarot. You can keep your stories of each card in a notebook that you can then refer to, or you can use this technique each and every time you do a tarot spread. The second method can allow for different stories depending on what your intuition is telling you at that particular moment which can be very useful. However, the first method will allow you to quickly grasp the different possible meanings for each card. Also when you go through the whole deck and write the different stories down this helps you to remember meanings of the different cards, and to see how certain cards relate to each other. Both methods are valuable and I have actually chosen to use both. Sometimes I will know intuitively that a card's story is going to be different because of the situation around the question that either I or another person has asked, and so I will write or tell a new story for that card based on that "knowing."

One rule of the Tarot to keep in mind while doing a reading is that any card which appears upside down is then going to tell whatever story is opposite to the one which would be told were the card right-side up.

For example, let us say that I pulled the Queen of Pentacles. This card has a woman who to me looks very beautiful but intense. She is sitting on a throne that has a goat head carved on the arm, and a lion head on

the top inside. There are also what look like stars on her throne. Her throne is outdoors surrounded by flowers, and then mountains in the distance. She is holding a pentacle in her lap and staring down at it. She looks like she is middle-aged, and there is a small brown rabbit in the far right bottom corner.

When looking at the Queen of Pentacles, I could tell a story about an older woman who is very focused and practical, perhaps cannot be distracted from her main goal. Even though she has power, she is a queen after all, and there is beauty all her as evidenced by the flowers, and mountains, she cannot see anything but that she has lost that which she is focused on. If this is the story that I tell based on the card, if this card were to turn up in a reading reversed, that story would be exactly the opposite. The story that I told when the card was right-side up was one focus and the inability to see the beauty around her. So for example if the card was reversed then the story would be one of ability to see the mountains, the flowers and wildlife around her. She would be distracted by all that was going on around her that was lovely. To me the pentacle represents practicality and the beautiful surroundings represent distraction and frivolity. This is just one way to understand the meaning of a tarot card. It is also useful when you are writing down the story of a particular card to also write down it's opposite meaning for those times when you draw a card upside down.

What helps, I think, is to compare your "story" with the traditional meaning of the card found in the book you bought with the deck or the list of meanings I provided here in this book. See how your story was the same as or different from the book version. It's also good to write down how the imagery on the card supports both your story and the "book meaning."

Step 3: Ritual

Have a tarot reading ritual. Meditate. Ask your higher self, universal knowledge or God to enlighten or reveal information which will help you or the inquirer to solve his/her problems. Do what feels right for you. Have a new age music in the background, burn incense or light a candle. However, a tarot ritual can be a full ritual in itself or something simple yet meaningful. Why do a ritual for a tarot reading? Ritual marks that what you are doing is not frivolous or for fun, but sacred and meaningful.

Ritual #1 (Full)

1. Create an Altar: Suggestions for Ritual Objects

Objects are known to pick up and store the energy of those who handle them, and for this reason ritual objects may be used by the Tarot reader in his/her working environment. They are usually of great significance to the reader, but sometimes objects and clothes are used to create an atmosphere and a mysterious ambience.

• a special cloth covers the table. It is usually dark, serving as a protection for the cards from unknown impressions stored within the table. Also a dark background will show off the gorgeous colors and pictures on the cards to their greatest advantage.

• candles – have a long history of use in religious, magical, and other types of ritual. They are used to illuminate spiritual darkness, attract positive energies and purify the air

• crystals and stones – are used for their specific positive properties to attract benevolent energies, and repel any negative influences. Colors are carefully selected for their specific occult meanings. Crystals have a magical lore that has been projected on to them since ancient times when people believed that they could be used as amulets (protectors) against misfortune, or talismans (active forces) to bring good luck to the owner.

• Incense – is a staple religious ritual also used since ancient times, believed to purify the air and eliminate negativity.

• personal objects of significance to the reader may be used. They could include pieces of jewelry, feathers, charms, etc.

• Dress – some Tarot readers are quite theatrical in their dress, and may use it to create a mysterious type of image.

2. Create Sacred Space

After setting up your altar, invite the Elements to your Tarot Ritual. You will need 5 candles, one for each of the cardinal directions plus Center.

Face East and say:
I turn to the East:
The realm of Air,
Where Swords cut through to truth.
Here, the Fool walks toward the precipice,
Ready to begin his journey.
Welcome East, Winds of Knowledge!
Blessed be! (light your East Candle)

Face South and say:
I invoke the South:
The realm of Fire,
Where Wands direct the action.
Here, the Lady of Strength shows her courage,
Standing strong in her passions.
Welcome South, Fire of Action!
Blessed be! (light your south candle)

Face West and say:
I embrace the West:
The realm of Water,
Where Cups hold the deepest emotions.
Here, Temperance brings balance
And welcomes me to give way to the flow.
Welcome West, Waters of Emotion!
Blessed be! (light your West candle)

Face North and say:
I ground in the North:
The realm of Earth,
Where Pentacles bring all the riches I need to grow.
Here, The Empress blooms forth,
Surrounded by the lush abundance of the Mother.
Welcome North, Cornerstone of Growth!
Blessed be! (light North Candle)

Face your altar and say:
In the Center, I stand in the Spirit.
Above and below, within and without.
Here, the Magician guides the power of the elements
And the High Priestess holds the mysteries unseen.
And all the cards themselves reflect only a semblance
Of all the wonder and power that life holds.
Welcome Center,
All that is, all that was, and all that will be!
Blessed be! (light the Center candle)

3. Simple Tarot Meditation

Shuffle the cards of the Major Arcana and pick one at random; this is your significator (theme card) for the reading. Put the rest of the cards aside. Pause for a few moments to silence the mind before continuing.

Look at the card in front of you. Take time to carefully observe the symbolism and colors of the card. Do not try to see through the card into other worlds (a later exercise). Simply take a mental note of every detail in the card itself.

Now close your eyes and try to reproduce the card in your mind's eye. Try to recall every detail to the best of your ability and take your time in doing it.

After about five minutes of building the card's image in your imagination, start to dismantle it, piece by piece like a jigsaw puzzle, until nothing of it remains in your mind.

When your mind has become cleared of the image, try to hold on to this state of mental silence for as long as you can.

Take your time to come out of the meditation. Don't get up abruptly.

4. The Working: Doing a Reading

You will now do a reading for yourself or for another person. It's recommended that you have a journal with you to record the cards, the spread used, and what the cards meant to you.

5. Ground and Center

You have spent quite a bit of time in sacred space. This can leave you feeling drained. This is a good time to center yourself, have a cracker with some cheese or peanut butter on it, or do a quick visualization of yourself as rooting like a tree to the earth.

6. Opening the Circle

Say Farewell to the Directions in the reverse order.

Face the altar and say:
Farewell, to the Magician and High Priestess
who have gifted my circle with Spirit,
The gift of the Gods.
I thank you for your presence.
Blessed be. (extinguish Center candle)
Face North and say:
Farewell to The Empress who resides
in the Realm of Pentacles.
Thank you for your grounding qualities of Earth
That encourage me to grow to my full potential.
I thank you for your presence./
Blessed be. (extinguish North candle)

Face West and say:
Farewell to Temperance, Card of Moderation
Ruler of Cups and Water.
Thank you for lending your emotions to me
So that my reading was deep and heartfelt.
I thank you for your presence.
Blessed be. (extinguish West candle)

Face South and say:
Farewell to the Lady of Strength,
Whose gentle mastery gives Fire to the world!
Your Wands guide me to where I need to go
and the energy to get there.
I thank you for your presence.
Blessed be. (extinguish South candle).

Face East and say:
Farewell to the Fool,
Who began this journey in Innocent Wisdom.
The Air that brings us thought in the flash of a Sword,
The Wind that Blows Messages to us from the East.
I thank you for your presence.
Blessed be. (extinguish East candle)

Say:
The circle is open, but unbroken. May the blessings of the Goddess be upon me (us). Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again.

Ritual #2 (Short)

Twilight's Tarot Ritual
by Twilight *Ritual copyright © 1998 Twilight*

For this ritual, we are assuming that the cards themselves have already been initiated and blessed.

Reader and Querent(s) are within the sacred space, as well as the deck (on an altar if one is available or a table) and the following tools:

Wand or Athame (as available)
Candles at the Quarters (colors can vary according to what's most meaningful to you, but generally an Air candle for the East, a Fire candle for the south, a Water candle for the west and an Earth candle for North.)
Candles for the God and Goddess on the right and left sides of the altar
Casting the circle:

With Wand, Athame or Power Hand, cast the circle in a Deosil (Clockwise) direction, starting and ending at the North Quarter. Visualize the protective circle flaming into being around you.

Calling the Quarters
create portals in your circle by drawing a 'door' with your Wand, Athame or Power Hand

Facing East:
Welcome, Guardians of the East, we hail you. Guide us into inspiration, empower our minds to comprehend.
Light Candle of the East

Facing South:
Welcome, Guardians of the South, we hail you. Guide us into intuition, empower spirits to create.
Light Candle of the South

Facing West:
Welcome, Guardians of the West, we hail you. Guide us into empathy, empower our hearts to love.
Light candle of the West

Facing North:
Welcome, Guardians of the North, we hail you. Bless this tarot to reveal what is hidden. Make known the mysteries of our lives. Guide us into depth, empower our eyes to see."
Light candle of the North

Calling the Gods

"God and Goddess, Lord and Lady, Father and Mother, be welcome here. Take our right hand and our left and walk with us today(-night)." Light God and Goddess candles on the altar.

Begin with silent meditation, visualize energy being drawn to the Tarot. As you feel the power rising, Reader leads the Querent in a chant:

Dana, Dana bless my hands
Turning the cards to reveal
Dana, Dana bless this deck

Mark the reading with your seal
repeat…

You can substitute the appropriate deity for divination in your preferred Pantheon.

When you feel fully prepared for the reading, proceed.

Even if you don't use a full ritual, you should at least do a ritual of protection before doing a reading.

Why would one need to perform a ritual of protection when reading the tarot cards? Because the cards are first and foremost a tool that helps the reader to help others. As with any tool one uses in their work, you'll want to keep the implement in good working order, so you'll need to protect the instrument safeguarding you.

Tarot cards are made of specially prepared heavy paper with thin, plastic, coating. They, in and of themselves, have no power but the reader is giving them "life" from THEIR energy. But because the reader is dealing with the spiritual realm, the reading could, inadvertently, attract a lower energy into the midst. Therefore, it is important that the reader learn about methods of protection.

Here are a few techniques can be used:

* Before a reading, **visualize yourself surrounded in a white light**. Speak out loud, "No negative energies or thoughts can penetrate this light."

* **Light a white candle.** The color white is associated with protection. Elicit the candles flame to become so bright that negative people, thoughts, and energies will run from its glow.

* **Quartz crystals are a powerful receptacle to draw negativity inside.** The size of crystal is up to you. The rock could be small enough to fit into the palm of your hand, or large enough to take up space on a table. The crystals will be in the semi-rough shape and the stones are not yet polished.

* **Spread regular table salt around your reading area**. This ritual will keep any negative energies from invading your space.

* After you shuffle your cards, before laying out a spread, **tap on the cards three times**. This clears away previous energies from earlier readings.

* **Take your cards as well as your crystals, outside.** Place them in a clean spot and let the rays of the sun dissipate the emotional baggage soaked into or placed upon your tools.

* **Try not to let anyone else handle your cards.** If this happens, as quickly as possible, tap the cards three times and then go through each individual card to place your energy back onto them.

* When you are not using your cards, **keep them wrapped in a silk cloth** and place them inside a pouch or box. this minimizes the possibility of anything unearthly attaching itself and influencing the reading.

Step 4: Shuffling the Cards & Asking Questions

There are no hard and fast rules for shuffling the tarot cards. You can shuffle the tarot cards yourself and have the inquirer cut it with the left hand(left brain for intuition) or you let the inquirer do both the shuffling and cutting of the tarot cards. The inquirer should at least touch the cards before the reading begins. (Make sure you tap the deck three times after the reading is done to clear the cards). Make sure you have clean cloth to lay you tarot cards. Have plenty of room to spread your cards around the table, so it won't look crowded and makes for easy and comfortable tarot reading.

Personally, I shuffle the cards at least three times while the person is telling me their question. This helps infuse the cards with the energy of the question.

What many people may not know is that the tarot answers best only certain kinds of questions.

Types of questions for a tarot reading
In principle you can ask any ethical question to tarot as long as you are the subject of the question. But some types of questions don't receive a clear and helpful answer.
You must know that tarot never gives a yes/no, good/bad, black/white... answer. Tarot describes a situation. It tells a kind of story.

Also tarot doesn't take decisions for you. It doesn't say what you must do. It's your responsibility to take account of the advice, tarot gave you, or not.
Another point of attention is that tarot never gives you an inevitable outcome. During a tarot reading using certain spreads, tarot gives an outcome of a situation. But this is an outcome on condition that nothing is changed to the present circumstances. It's up to you to change the circumstances if you don't like the outcome.
In my experience this are the most frequent asked types of questions for a tarot reading:

- **Questions about the evolution of something**

  This is the kind of question you ask when you want to know what the outcome will be from a certain situation.
  In general tarot gives a clear and helpful answer for this type of question. You mostly will also get an indication of where there are possible difficulties.

- **Questions that ask for the description of a situation**

  When people want to know more about the background of a certain situation.
  This is often the case for introspective questions.

- **Question about the Personality**

  Example: "I have problems for communication with other people. Could you tell me about the background of these problems?"

- **Questions that ask for an advice of tarot**

  Example: "How should I change myself to give a new start to my relation?"

The above types of questions are all suited for a good tarot reading.

But often people also ask questions that are not so well suited. This are the types of questions that ask for a black/white answer from tarot. Or that ask tarot to take a decision for them.

Here are some examples:

- **Yes/No questions**

  Example: “Will I have a relationship with the person I met last week?” There is a yes/no spread; however, I am not fond of it, which I will explain in a moment. For a yes/no spread, lay down three cards in a row. If 2 or more are upright, then the answer is yes; if two or more are reversed, then the answer is no. The reason I don’t like this is because people are never satisfied with yes/no answers. What will happen is that if they don’t like the answer, they will argue with it or ask for more readings on the same subject until they get an answer they like.

- **Questions that ask tarot to make a decision**

  Example: “Where should I go during the holidays: France or Spain?” There are no cards in the tarot deck that list countries, so there is no way the cards could tell you. There are, however, decision spreads that help guide you toward making a decision; but once again, it is YOU making a decision, not the cards. What the cards will indicate is trends if you go one route, and trends if you go another route. Having a negative reading about a possible route is not necessarily bad: it is all about what risks you want to take in making a decision.

- **Questions about time**

  Example: “When will I find a new house?” Tarot will never give a strict timing on any subject. Tarot is about descriptions. Now, having said that, one can do tarot spreads that specify time, like a days of the week spread, a months of the year spread, or a quarterly spread. The suits themselves can specify a time frame like weeks or months, but this is very general. Here is a chart that will help you gauge timing in tarot:

  Pentacles: Spring, Upright months, Reversed Years
  Wands: Summer, Weeks
  Cups: Autumn, Days
  Swords: Winter, Upright Months, Reversed Time Undetermined
  Sunday = the Sun card
  Monday = High priestess
  Tuesday = the Tower
  Wednesday = the Magician
  Thursday = the Wheel
  Friday = the Empress
  Saturday = the World
  Zodiac signs/Major Arcana cards
  4 Emperor = Aries March 21 – April 20th
  5 Hierophant = Taurus April 21- May 21
  6 Lover = Gemini May 22 – June 21
  7 Chariot = Cancer June 22 – July 23
  8 Strength = Leo July 24 – August 23
  9 Hermit = Virgo Aug 24 –September 23
  10 Justice = Libra September 24 - October 23
  11 Wheel of fortune = mid point
  13 Death = Scorpio October 24 – November 22
  14 Temperance = Sagittarius November 23 –December 21
  15 Devil = Capricorn December 22 – January 20
  17 Star = Aquarius January 21 – February 19
  18 Moon = Pisces February 20 – March 20th

- **<u>Questions about healthc</u>**
  Example: “Do I have cancer?” There are no cards in the tarot deck that specifically relate to health. While pentacles do relate to things of the body, the material plane, and by extension health, it cannot be specific. It can only indicate “health generally good” or “health generally blocked.”

Of course, people sometimes ask double questions that belong to several types.

For example: “Is my love relationship solid and how will it evolve?”. This is a combination about the situation of a love relation and about the evolution of that same relation. It really should be broken into two spreads because it is two questions.

A question should always be related to yourself. Never ask something about somebody else, like: “How is the relationship between my boss and his wife?” You could get an answer from a tarot reading for a question like this, but it is highly unethical.

A tarot reading is also not suitable for pure "materialistic" questions. You should not expect that tarot will give you the winning lotto numbers or tell you where the treasure of the Incas is hidden.

This doesn't mean that you can't ask about material things. If the object is related to you, then you might get an answer from Tarot. For instance "Where will I find a new house?" would not be a good question. But “What dreams and desires will a new house represent for me?” could very well be considered.

When to ask for a tarot reading
The answer on this question is very simple: when you truly feel the need for it. It works best if you have a heartfelt need and desire to answer a burning question. It will work less well if the reading is done just on a lark or to kill time.

Don't let yourself be influenced by anybody. Only listen to your inner voice, because that’s telling you what you need to hear.

Another question is: "How long should I wait between two tarot readings?" In this case you can use the following tips:

- In the very first place: listen to your inner voice. This overrules anything else.

- Some spreads, used in a tarot reading, give you a kind of intermediate outcome.

- When you have reached that point, you could ask for a follow up reading. But be aware that, if you have changed anything to the initial circumstances, that outcome never might be realized.

- It's not a good idea to ask for a new tarot reading, on the same subject, too fast. You must give yourself the time to deal with the first reading. Don't rush it. You are not a machine. Myself I think you should at least wait 1 month, even 2 months, between two tarot readings on the same subject.

Step 5: Choose Your Tarot Card Spread

Tarot reading can be made easier if you successfully choose the right tarot layout for your specific purposes. Examples of popular tarot card spreads are Horoscope, Celtic Cross, Tree of Life and Calendar. However, these are very large spreads and can look intimidating to the beginner. It's best to start with shorter, smaller spreads at first like a three card or a five card spread. There are some beginner spreads at the end of this book for you to try out. If you want to pick a broad time frame work for your prediction or take an overall look at the various areas of someone's life or would rather want an inbuilt timing and see immediately where the most meaningful and eventful moments-there are specific tarot card spreads for just any particular purposes.

There are thousands of tarot card spreads on the Internet. Or you could design your own. It's not as hard as you might think! Designing your own tarot spreads can be fun and rewarding, and it's not as difficult as you might think. It's okay to use a spread (layout of tarot cards) that someone else has designed, such as one you find in a book, but creating your own can make your readings much more personalized.

Identify the Objectives of Your Tarot Spread
First, consider the objective of your spread. Do you want a spread to reveal your inner fears or blockages? Do you need a good relationship spread? How about a spread to highlight the major external influences at work in your life? Your tarot spread can be general in purpose, or you can make it narrowly defined to focus on a specific topic.

Create a List of Questions
Once you know the objective of your spread, come up with a list of questions you want the reading to answer, and then create positions for the tarot cards that will represent each answer. Some good questions would be, "What is my current status with this situation?" "What am I not aware of with this situation?" "What outside influences may be affecting this situation?" "Am I hindering this situation in any way?" "Which actions can I take to make this situation better?" "Are other people interfering with this situation?" "What can I do to lessen their impact?" and so on. Basically, any question you have about any situation can be integrated into your tarot spread.

Designing the Layout of Tarot Cards in Your Spread
You can get as creative and complex as you want with your tarot spread, but it's best to choose a layout that is simple and makes sense to you. It should be easy to memorize so you don't have to keep referring to a diagram as you're performing a reading. When you're first starting out, consider keeping the layout pretty plain. For example, have 3 rows of cards, with 3 cards in each row. Or just lay the cards out in one continuous row.

Let the Tarot Cards Tell You a Story
I love to design "intuitive spreads," which means I don't designate a category for each card. Rather, I lay the cards out and let them tell me a story. Here's an example of a Past, Present and Future spread that can tell a great story: lay out 3 cards in 3 rows, each row above the other. The bottom row of 3 cards represents the Past. The middle row of 3 cards represents the Present. The top row of 3 cards represents the Future. Once you have the cards laid out, begin at the bottom left of the spread, at the first card in the first row. Then read across the two cards to the right in the same row, and then move up to the middle row and do the same thing, and again with the top row. After using this spread a few times, you'll notice that the cards seem to connect together, and build upon one another so you see a "story" being revealed. Spreads like this are also great for understanding how our past experiences influence our present and future.

The most important point to remember about designing your own tarot spreads is to have fun and experiment with it. Don't feel that you have to strive for perfection. Just like anything else in life, the more you do it, the better you'll get at it.

Step 6: Choose your Significator

In a tarot reading, this represents the inquirer. Significator can be chosen in different ways. Ask for your inquirer's birth sign and then correspond it with the appropriate tarot card suit.

Aquarius, Gemini, Libra- Swords
Virgo, Capricorn, Taurus-Pentacles
Leo, Sagittarius, Aries- Wands
Pisces, Cancer, Scorpio- Cups

Then match it with the sex and age for the court cards.

Kings-male 25 years old and above
Queens-female 25 years and above
Pages-female teenagers
Knights- male teenagers

Some tarot card spreads though don't require a significator. Once a significator is chosen don't just forget about it the whole tarot reading session. Check how it relates with the rest of the tarot cards, in the layout as you go along. Just like in a novel, make your significator the main character.

Step 7: Analyze Your Tarot Layout

Look for a pattern. Are there more Major Arcana than Minor Arcana cards? More cups than wands? If the majority cards are the Major Arcana then that means more concerns on the major turning points of life (changing careers, retirement, marriage, children etc.) Minor Arcana cards means focus more on day to day concerns. More tarot suit of cups means a love story, more wands, then it's an action-packed adventure.

Symbols in Tarot

Although it is important that you enjoy and can identify with the pictures in the tarot cards, what is of far more importance is the response to the symbols in Tarot.

Tarot does not simply "supply" on demand. Although there are "book meanings" for the cards that can be used as a guide, a single tarot card seldom has the same meaning or implication from reading to reading, or person to person. Especially when combined with any of the other cards.

When venturing on a Tarot reading, it is the beginning of a search, and the visual symbols are the signposts that lead us in the correct direction. Each time you begin a journey you will notice different images, different colors and different actions, despite reading the same deck. No artist in tarot has drawn any image for the sake of filling paper, used any color for the sake of "beautifying" the card.

Each and every little thing on each card is of great significance.

Body Language in Tarot

In day to day life, body language shows what a person actually feels, despite what he says. For example, a foot pointed innocently at another person can indicate a "liking" for that person. Arms being crossed can indicate that a person feels threatened or is unwilling to share themselves and their "space" with others. A person propping up her head, hand under chin, or cheek cradled in palm can be an indication of boredom. Facial expressions, gestures and stances are all relevant in the art of body language.

Firstly, in getting to know your cards, you should act out the card. Physically put your body in the position shown on the card. Stand with both feet on the ground, raise one arm to the sky (as in the Magician card) and lift your chin. How do you feel? Proud? Victorious? Capable? Now, for the seven of swords, pretend you have the swords under your cloak. Bend your head, climb over the wall. Do you still feel victorious, or do you feel a little "sneaky and devious"?

Try this exercise with various cards. Try one a day and write your findings in your journal. Remember to take the time to feel what emotional responses you have. It is, after all, known that if you feel down and force a smile, a chemical reaction (or something) takes place and you instantly feel happier.
This exercise of mimicking the character in the card will have the same effect, you will experience the emotions connected with the card, and by this, become more connected with the card too.
Also, it is important to note whether the person is alone or in company. What is he facing, and what does he have his back turned on?

Numerology in Tarot

The numbers of the cards all hold significance too. Have a look at the following summations and apply them to the cards. Remember, Numerology is a science in itself, and I have only supplied very basic meanings for the numbers. It is a good exercise to think of the number, the way it sounds, look at your cards and what is happening in the card. Soon, you will have your own associations to work with, but these are nice summaries to work with none-the-less.

ONES New Beginnings, new projects. Innovative approaches. The self, individualism. Focus.

TWOS Balancing 2 options or demands. Sorting out your immediate priorities. Finding a compromise between differing opinions. Co-operation. Waiting periods. Reconciliation. Female/Male, Yin/Yang. Union. Finding direction.

THREES Expansion of horizons and options. Seeking something that is on offer. Being prepared to make considerable input and hard work that may only bear fruit later. Growth. Creativity. A fertile number. A "transforming" movement. Being who you truly are.

FOURS Seeking a practical solution. Accepting there are present limitations in your plans. Making sure any schemes have a firm foundation and structure, and that the background is adequately researched. Discipline. Earthy and stable. Logic, authority and endurance. Natural order. Responsibility.

FIVES Striking out alone, seeking an alternative solution. Clear communications and above all looking at the gains instead of the losses. Freedom, change through strife. Free from the restrictions of the fours. An inner struggle that will soon require a decision. Struggle, high risks.

SIXES Harmony. The importance of making ourselves, as well as others happy. Consolidate achievements and make your efforts notice. Partial or temporary success. Challenge and choice. The beginning of harmony. Balance after effort. Harmony through conflict.

SEVENS The unconscious mind. Being aware of what is going on beneath the surface with your dealings with others. Using intuition, especially in summing up other people, as they may not be what they seem. Wisdom and the inner self. A mystical number. Ordeals, obstacles, victory and achievement. Movement, development.

EIGHTS Caution, the conventional route is probably the best one now. Not taking short cuts, following all the legal and safety regulations. Balance, well thought out change (especially in attitude). Looking deeply at attitudes. Progress, rather than change for the sake of change. Clarity. Equal Karma (as you sow, you reap). The balance of "2", the stability of "4". Growth, choice, priorities.

NINES Courage and determination. If you stick at things you will succeed. It may be time to shed some unnecessary burdens and make sure that everyone is doing their share. The end of a cycle. A need to move forward. A lot has been achieved, but there is still a lot to be learnt. Striving for perfection. New phase about to begin. Readiness. Waiting for opportunities, right timing, letting go.

TENS Power and energy, consolidation of matters before a new chapter begins. The essence of its (the card) ruling element. Preparation for next step. (1 + 0 = 1). Completion, culmination, higher wisdom. The beginning is embedded in the end.

Color Symbology in Tarot

Colors are very symbolic in Tarot. Look at the clothes worn, the skies, the horizons etc. Note the following common associations ("common" because colors are used symbolically in many spheres of life, esoterically and otherwise).

White - New ventures and beginnings in love and business. Purity, Purity of intention, inner wisdom.

Black - Letting go, the unknown, old sorrows, regrets or guilt. Possibly problems with older people, Black is also universally associated with strength.

Brown - Practical issues, the home and family, the earth, grounding, application, implementation and production.

Pink - Reconciliation, friendship and health (Though seldom used in tarot cards)

Red - Fertility, Love, survival issues, passion and power. Love, lust and trusting ones feelings.

Orange - Identity issues, energy, vitality, spontaneity, life force, personal happiness, and partnerships - whether at work or at home.

Yellow - Spirituality, communication, undeveloped potential, career and travel.

Green - Creativity, regeneration, fertility and productivity, matters of the heart, romance and family.

Blue - Wisdom and clarity. Learning and examinations, interviews and matters of principle.

Purple - Leadership and personal power. Wisdom, the soul and spirituality, religious insights of any kind. The color of Royalty.

Silver - (Though seldom used in tarot) Dreams, special wishes and major life changes.

Gold - (Though seldom used in tarot) Translating life changing plans into reality.
Once again, these are merely guidelines (with the added weight of being universally the most common associations) but if they do not feel right to you, then change them.

Symbology in Tarot

Of course, the main symbols in Tarot are the four suites. Wands, Cups, Swords and Pentacles. Despite having a basic knowledge of the implication of drawing a particular suite, the objects themselves have great relevance and should be noted.

Wands - are branches which spring forth life and new growth, just like the ideas and inspirations they represent. Little leaves and blossoms soon to grow and expand into warm colorful life... again, just like those ambitions and plans, those creative urges and impulses. Are the wands upright, standing proudly? Or are slanted and irregular? Are they resting, being held in place, or do they stand alone, without any support from a character in the card? Are the wands engaged in battle? Are they being used strategically? Are they being carried, or are they flying through the air with energy and direction?

Example: The Five Of Wands. The wands are held in conflict against each other, therefore the ideas and inspirations are clashing and conflicting each other.

Cups - are open and receptive, this implies the womb and femininity. Cups contain water, and the fluidity of emotions and feelings, intuitions and dreams. When you pull a "Cups" card, note the following. How full/empty are the cups? How plain/elaborate are the cups? Are the cups tilted or straight? Are the cups hidden, offered, lined up neatly in a row, or scattered?

Example: The Three of Cups. While some cups are standing, some have fallen. Some have been spilt, and some are still full, therefore, while some emotions are still standing, others have fallen. Some emotions have been spilt yet some are still full! (Get the idea?)

Swords - are sharp and double-edged, just like the words and thoughts of men (unfortunately). They are neither soft, for feminine. As with the wands, note the positioning of the Swords, the use of them, the action. Whether they are being carried or offered. Are they precariously balanced, or peacefully resting? This advises what is the status of the thoughts and mental patterns of the Querent.

Example: The four of swords. Above the resting body, three swords are suspended (horizontally in the Rider Waite Deck) (caught up in the trees in the Robin Wood Deck). They do not threaten the body in any way.

Therefore, the thoughts and mental anguishes are suspended for the time being as the body rests, i.e., a period of recuperation.

Pentacles - are heavy, valuable grounding objects, like coins, rocks etc. They denote issues of wealth, family issues, the home and all things solid and real. Working hard, doing the dishes, mowing the lawn. Once again, note the positioning of the Pentacles in the card. Are they being offered or hidden? Are neatly in a row, or in a state of disarray?

Example: The Eight of Pentacles. Wooden disks are lined up neatly on the wall, whilst the remaining are horizontally lying on the table and being worked upon. Therefore, much work has been accomplished successfully, yet there is still work to be done.

In-depth Analysis of Tarot Cards Through Symbology

In the reading of (or the meditation on) each card, the following should be observed and noted in your journal. This method may seem long, and you should rightly give yourself ample time with this analysis. Remember, the art of becoming a Tarot Master lays in patience, patience, patience and actually working with and getting to know your cards.

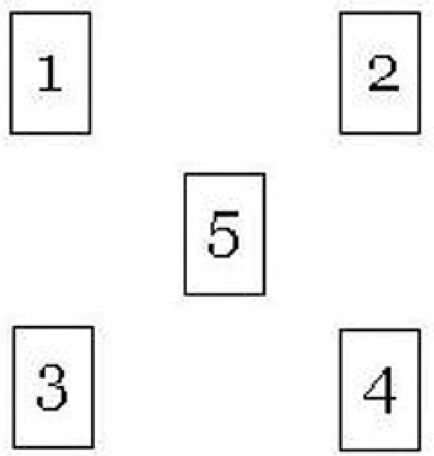
What is the name of the card?
Is it a Major or Minor Arcana card? Do not forget that a Major Arcana card has far more impact on the Querent than a Minor Arcana card.
What suite is represented, and what does this mean to you?
What element is represented and what does this mean to you?
What is the number of the card, and of what relevance is this?
Who or what is the main character?
What is he or she doing, and how what does the body language tell you?
What is the positioning of the wands/cups/pentacles or swords?
What elements are present, although not belonging to the suite, i.e. is air (clouds) shown in a cups card, is water shown in a wands card, etc.?
What colors are in the card, and what do they symbolize?
What other symbols are in the card, i.e. fish, birds, roses, horses, the sun, the moon, etc., and what do they symbolize?
The symbols which you noted previously, what are they doing in the card, and what is their position? How does this affect the symbolism?
What astrological sign does the card indicate, and what relevance does this have?
What planet is represented, how does this affect the card's meaning?
What is your overall summary of this card, based on the above symbolical analysis?

Tarot Spreads

3-Card Spread

This is the most basic and straightforward spread of all times. For this spread, draw three cards from a well shuffled deck and lay them out in a straight line. This spread has many different applications. These 3 positions can either stand for 'Past, Present and Future' or 'Situation, Advice and Outcome' or 'Option one, Option two, Outcome' and so on. You can be totally creative with this spread. Also observe the flow of the reading and read in the direction which seems natural to you.

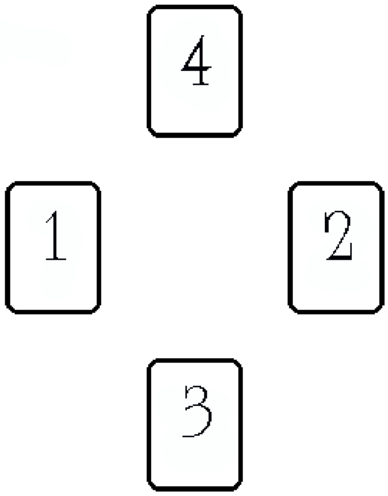
5-Card Spread



This is a step-up on the basic 3-Card Spread. For this draw 5 cards from a well shuffled deck and lay them out in a “quincunx” pattern which is exactly like the “5” on a pair of dice. Like the previous spread, this too has several applications. For example, the five positions could be 'Past, Present, Hurdles, Advice, and Outcome'. Here is my favorite position definition for this spread: 'Fire, Water, Air, Earth and Spirit' where each element and its practical associations are explored with the card drawn in that position.

7-Card Spread: Again a very good and simple spread. Draw 7 cards from a well shuffled deck and lay them in either a straight line or in a horse-shoe pattern. The positions would be: 'Past, Present, Situation, Hurdles, Advice, Outcome One and Outcome Two'.

The Simple Cross Layout

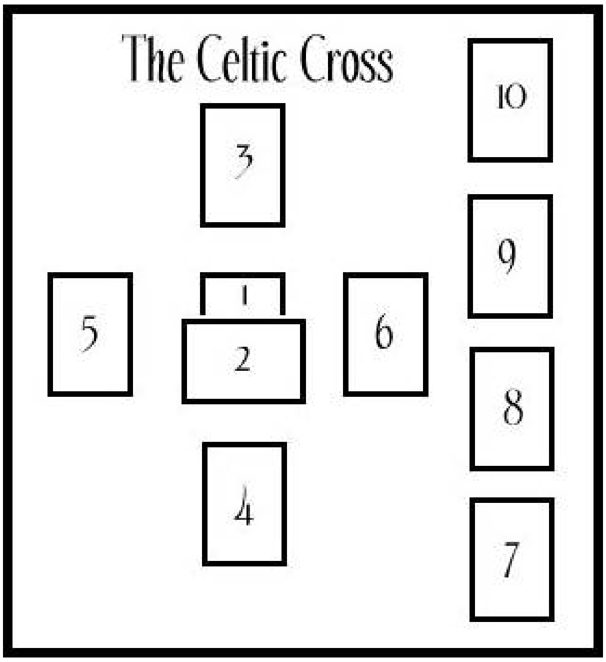


The Simple Cross layout has been identified as a pre-Christian, pre-celtic layout that aids meditational focus through examination of basic elemental influences. With a card selected in each of the four elemental directions representing earth, water, air, and fire this spread offers insight into material resources, communication issues, emotional factors, and physical or spiritual capacities effecting the outcome of the question at hand.

1 - Air (communication)
2 - Water (emotions)
3 - Fire (spiritual impulses)
4 - Earth (physical and financial resources)

This is a simple all-purpose layout that examines primarily present influences over the querents inquiry and functions very well as a daily meditation

Celtic Cross



Card 1: The present

Card 2: The immediate challenge facing the querent. You will often pull a difficult card here, which will indicate an obstacle that must be overcome. When you pull a "good" card here, examine it carefully because it will still represent a challenge.

Card 3: Distant past, foundation. This card should indicate the root of the subject matter of the question

Card 4: More recent past, including events. This will indicate events taking place, not necessarily directly connected to the question. For example, if a love affair going wrong Card 3 would show the root of why it is going wrong, whereas Card 4 will show something that recently happened to reflect this. You could see this as a "check comment" card - a way of seeing that the reading is sound.

Card 5: The best that can be achieved. This is directly related to the question. Note that this may not necessarily gel against Card 10 - it depends whether you are able to get the best. However, a negative card here probably means that it is worth cutting your losses rather than putting any more effort into the situation.

Card 6: Immediate Future. This indicates events in the next few days or week(s). This reading does not cover months.

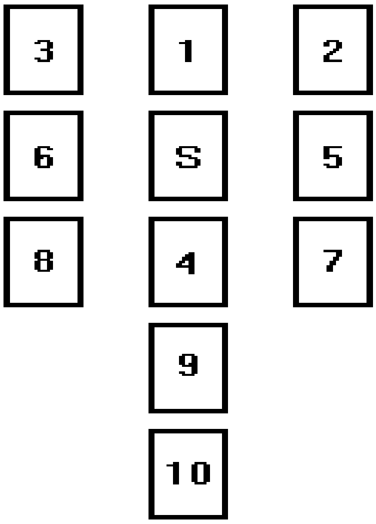
Card 7: Factors or inner feelings affecting the situation. Compare this against Card 1 in order to understand underlying forces/trends. If there is conflict between them this tends to indicate that the querent is going in the wrong direction.

Card 8: External influences. People, energies or events which will affect the outcome of the question and are beyond the querent's control.

Card 9: Hopes or fears around the situation. This may produce a card that confuses us badly. Always bear in mind that hopes and fears are closely intertwined, therefore that which we hope for may also be that which we fear, and so may fail to happen. Sometimes it is useful to draw a second card for clarification after the reading has been laid, and to read the two together.

Card 10: Final outcome. This is a fairly self explanatory card. However it is worth saying that if the card comes up somewhat ambiguous, once again it may be worth drawing three extra cards to clarify. These should be interpreted through the lens of Card 10. So if the card drawn is the Tower and we draw the Ace of Cups, Princess of Cups and Four of Cups in a reading about a relationship, the Tower would indicate that it is time to move on. The Ace of Cup suggests that a new relationship is promised with better things ahead. The Princess of Cups brings new love (and possibly pregnancy). The Four of Cups shows deep levels of contentment and happiness, and many options for progress.

Tree of Life Tarot Spread



The Significator. This card represents the querent and should be chosen from among the Kings, Queens, Knights, or Pages.

1. Aims or Ideals.
This card represents what the querent would like to achieve.

2. Influences.
What is influencing the situation.

3. General Nature.
This is the general nature of the question; it defines it more completely.

4. The Key.
This may be something that the querent isn't seeing; it is the key to the answer to the question or how to resolve the situation, or how to achieve what the querent is attempting to achieve.

5. Influences of the Present.
Influences on the situation or question from present circumstances that the querent needs to take into account for this reading.

6. Influences of the Future.
these will be things the querent will want to look out for.

7. Effect of the Significator.
This is the effect that the significator (the querent) has on the situation.

8. Effect of the Environment.
The effect that the people around the querent have on the situation, as well as other things surrounding the querent.

9. Hopes and Fears.
These are things that the querent maybe fears will happen or hops will happen with the situation.

10. The Final Outcome.
The ultimate answer to the querent's question.